

# Freeway foes cite health risks to youth

## Group calls informational meetings

Protecting Arizona Resources and Children (PARC) has called an informational meeting to update residents on the group's effort to oppose the South Mountain Freeway

**Date:** Sunday, Jan. 22  
**Time:** 2:30-4 p.m. and 4:30-5 p.m.  
**Place:** Ironwood Branch Library, 4333 E. Chandler Blvd.  
**For information:** [www.protectarizonachildren.org](http://www.protectarizonachildren.org)

By Doug Murphy  
Staff Writer

While the Arizona Department of Transportation studies possible routes for the Loop 202 South Mountain Freeway, a group of residents continue their work

to make sure the freeway is never built.

PARC, Protecting Arizona Resources and Children, a grass-roots organization begun by Melanie Pai, will hold two informational meetings on Sunday, Jan. 22, to bring

people up to speed on the current petition drive and to brief people on the latest developments and how people can help.

The meetings will be held at the Ironwood Branch library, 4333 E. Chandler Blvd. The first **more Group, see page 4**

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## Group

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will be from 2:30-4 p.m. and the second will be from 4:30-5 p.m.

Pai and supporters have contacted the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality and other departments in an effort to discuss what she says are health problems associated with freeways.

"Thus far no tangible results," said Pai, but that hasn't stopped her or PARC supporters from lobbying.

"We're going to keep knocking on the door of every Arizona agency until one decides to look at the health implications on children of a freeway," said Pai.

The hope of PARC is that the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) will re-evaluate the need for the freeway once health concerns are included in the study.

"ADOT's direction needs to change with the times," said Pai, who pointed out that there are six schools and 6,000 students who will be within feet of the freeway if it is built along Pecos Road as was recently described by ADOT.

According to Dan Lance, an engineer with ADOT, the proximity of schools to freeways has never been a factor in route selection.

"We've built freeways right next to schools and

we've seen schools built right next to freeways without a problem," Lance said two weeks ago.

But last year the California Air Resources Board released an advisory manual that mentioned studies that have demonstrated a link between poor air quality, including air pollution from freeways, with cancerous and non-cancerous respiratory illnesses. The manual recommends keeping air pollution sources, including freeways, separate from schools.

The Loop 202 South Mountain Freeway has been on the maps since 1988, running east to west along Pecos Road from Interstate 10 by Ahwatukee Foothills, through a corner of South Mountain Park and reconnecting with I-10 in the West Valley somewhere between 51st Avenue and the Loop 101/I-10 interchange.

Depending on which West Valley route is approved early next year, anywhere from 120 to 780 homes could be demolished, including mostly new homes built in the last few years.

In Ahwatukee Foothills, a preliminary estimate shows that between 255 and 695 homes would have to be demolished to make way for the freeway depending on whether the freeway is built above or below ground.

That decision won't happen until late next year or early 2007.

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